

Maundy Thursday

The word "Maundy" is thought to have come from the Latin word "mandatum" which means commandment. Maundy would then refer to instructions Jesus gave His disciples in the Upper Room on the Thursday before Passover. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another." (John 13.34)

- Also called Holy Thursday.
- Usually celebrated in Churches by participating in Holy Communion.
- In early centuries, and still today in some places, the day was commemorated with a symbolic washing of feet.

Good Friday

- The question is often asked, "Why Good?"
- The word "good" may refer to the great good God was able to accomplish for humans in bringing to life the Christ.
- From the perspective of what humans did it truly was "bad" Friday, but from the post-Resurrection perspective of what God did it can be perceived as "good".
- Another suggestion as to the origin of "good" was that it represents a vowel shift from an older form of "God's Friday". The change from God's Friday to Good Friday would parallel the one from "God be wi' ye" to "goodbye".

Easter

- Expressed by the proclamation "Christ is Risen".
- The date for Easter was set at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D.
- The annual date for Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon of the Spring equinox.
- The early Church celebrated the resurrection of Christ every Sunday.
- Early Christians who were also Jews, worshipped in the synagogue on the Sabbath (seventh day) and then met in homes, or other places, on Sunday (the first day) to celebrate the risen Christ by breaking bread, prayers and hymns.

From: "Teaching and Celebrating Lent - Easter" by Patricia and Donald Griggs

A RULE FOR LENT

There can be more to making a Lenten rule than simply giving up sweets or sugar in your tea. A Lent rule should fit the needs of each individual. It should always be something that leads to God's glory, and to this end you might be led to 'take something extra on', rather than the traditional, "I'm giving up something for Lent". For example, many of us are not good stewards of our own bodies concerning the amount of sleep we get. If you habitually lie in bed every morning, then an appropriate rule concerning this for Lent might be to get up half an hour earlier each day. If, however, you know that you never get to bed early enough, then an appropriate Lent rule concerning this might be to decide to go to bed half an hour earlier each night.

A Lent rule provides an opportunity for you to make a space in your life, in some way, so that the Lord may fill it.

For example, you might give up watching a 'soap opera' on TV during Lent and devoting that time instead to Bible reading, or visiting someone, or simply making a weekly telephone call to someone who is lonely.

Here are some other suggestions:

- * Go without one meal per week and give the cost of it to one of the mission agencies, or one of the world aid bodies.
- * Fix an extra time of prayer each day.
- * Prepare for Sunday worship each week by reading through beforehand the set readings for the day.
- * Get to Church worship each Sunday at least 15 minutes earlier and spend the time in quiet preparation.

- * Visit a particular person once a week during Lent and pray with them.
- * Visit a sick person regularly during Lent.
- * Give extra money during Lent to one of the Mission societies, and/or to one of the aid agencies or your parish Church.
- * Take a good look at what you spend a lot of time and effort on. Determine whether it's a particularly Godly activity, and if it's not then determine to do without it during Lent. e.g. Resolve not to buy any new clothes this Lent, or not to spend so much time on personal vanity ...doing your nails or your hair or whatever!
- * Let someone else have some time for prayer and Bible study...e.g. give your partner a break from the washing up during Lent.
- * Shoulder one extra task that's usually done by someone else.
- * Spend the whole of Lent only mentioning people's good points in conversation.
- * Take your courage in both hands and share your faith with one other person at work each week during Lent.
- * Attend a weekday service of worship as well as Sunday's.
- * Take an honest look at what you are avoiding in your Christian life and tackle it.

etc. etc. etc..... The list is endless. Do something that suits you, but remember do it cheerfully, humbly and give the glory to the Lord.

FROM ASH WEDNESDAY TO EASTER

Lent

- A season of the Church year like Advent.
- Begins with Ash Wednesday.
- Origin of word from Anglo Saxon word "lencten" meaning "spring".
- Liturgical colour is violet or purple signifying penitence, humility and suffering.
- Often recognised through symbolic act of fasting.
- Forty days plus six Sundays in Lent.
- Forty days are symbolic of Jesus' trial and preparation in the wilderness after His baptism and before the beginning of His ministry.

Ash Wednesday

- The beginning of Lent.
- Ashes have been symbolic since early Biblical times and symbolise grief, mourning, repentance.
- The ashes used to make the sign of the Cross on the forehead of believers are from the charred remains of palm crosses used on Palm Sunday the previous year.
- The connection of Palm Sunday and Ash Wednesday is appropriate since Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem led quickly to His death.

Palm Sunday

- Commemorates the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- See Matthew 21.1-11, Mark 11.1-10, Luke 19.28-40, John 12.12-19.
- To the Semitic person the palm tree has always been a tree of honour; it marked the place where they could find water for their flock.
- Even today palm branches are placed on the graves of some Semitic people to symbolise eternal life.